

REMARKS

This is a full and timely response to the outstanding non-final Office Action mailed October 7, 2002. Upon entry of the foregoing amendments in this response, claims 3-6, 9-12, 14, and 15 remain pending in the application. Claims 3, 6, 9, and 12 have been amended. In addition, claims 1, 2, 7, 8, and 13 have been cancelled and new claims 14 and 15 have been added. The Applicant respectfully submits that the new claims add no new matter to the application.

In the Office Action, claims 1-13 stand preliminarily rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b). Reconsideration and allowance of the application and presently pending claims 3-6, 9-12, 14, and 15 are respectfully requested.

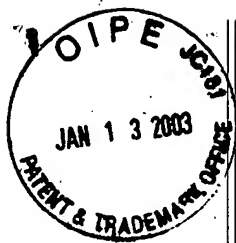
Response To §102(b) Rejections

In the Office Action, claims 1-13 have been preliminarily rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,671,956, to Crawford (hereafter "*Crawford*"). In response, the Applicant has added claim 14 and changed claims 3 and 6 to depend on claim 14. In addition, the Applicant has added claim 15 and changed claims 9 and 12 to depend on claim 15. The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 14 and 15 do not add new matter.

The Applicant respectfully submits that claims 3-6, 9-12, 14, and 15 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests allowance of the above-mentioned claims.

HAYES SOLOWAY P.C.
130 W. CUSHING ST.
TUCSON, AZ 85701
TEL. 520.882.7623
FAX. 520.882.7643

175 CANAL STREET
MANCHESTER, NH 03101
TEL. 603.668.1400
FAX. 603.668.8567



CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and for at least the reasons set forth above, the Applicant respectfully submits that all rejections have been rendered moot, and/or accommodated, and that the now pending claims 3-6, 9-12, 14 and 15 are in condition for allowance. Therefore, the Applicant respectfully requests that all outstanding rejections be withdrawn and that this application and all presently pending claims be allowed to issue. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding the Applicant's response, the Examiner is encouraged to telephone the Applicant's undersigned counsel.

Respectfully submitted,

Norman P. Soloway
Attorney for Applicant
Reg. No. 24,315

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

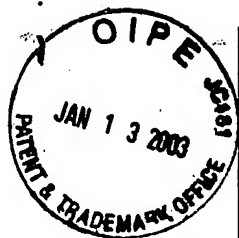
I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as First Class Mail in an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231 on January 7, 2003, at Manchester, New Hampshire.

By Breanne Stewarts

HAYES SOLOWAY P.C.

130 W. CUSHING ST.
TUCSON, AZ 85701
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FAX. 603.668.8567



ANNOTATED VERSION OF MODIFIED CLAIMS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

The following is a marked version of the amended claims. Please amend the following claims by adding the language that is underlined (“ ”) and by deleting the language that is enclosed within brackets (“[]”):

3. (Once Amended) The thin flange according to claim [1] 14, comprising at least one mounting feature disposed within a perimeter defined by at least a first sealing surface.

6. (Once Amended) The thin flange according to claim [1] 14, comprising at least one feed-through.

9. (Once Amended) The vacuum component mounting system according to claim [7] 15, wherein the thin flange contains at least one mounting feature.

12. (Once Amended) The vacuum component mounting system according to claim [7] 15, wherein the thin flange comprises at least one feed-through.

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FAX. 520.882.7643

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MANCHESTER, NH 03101
TEL. 603.668.1400
FAX. 603.668.8567